

Possibility of Regression

Definition/ cut-off value

A participant who has previously been certified eligible for the Program may be considered to be at nutritional risk in the next certification period if the competent professional authority determines there is a possibility of regression in nutritional status without the benefits that the WIC Program provides. The State may limit the number of times and circumstances under which a participant may be certified due to the possibility of regression (see Clarifications/Guidelines section).

Participant category and priority level

Category	Priority
Breastfeeding Women	IV
Non-Breastfeeding Women	VII
Children	VII

Justification

On occasion, a participant's nutritional status may be improved, to the point that s/he rises slightly above the cutoff of the initial risk condition by the end of the certification period. This occurs most frequently with those conditions that contain specific cutoffs or thresholds, such as anemia or inappropriate growth. Removal of such individuals from the Program can result in a "revolving-door" situation where the individual's recently improved nutritional status deteriorates quickly, so that s/he then re-enters the Program at equal or greater nutrition risk status than before. Therefore, WIC Program regulations permit State agencies to certify previously certified individuals who do not demonstrate a current nutrition risk condition against the possibility of their reverting to the prior existing risk condition if they do not continue to receive WIC benefits. This policy is consistent with the preventive nature of the WIC Program, and enables State and local agencies to ensure that their previous efforts to improve a participant's nutrition status, as well as to provide referrals to other health care, social service, and/or public assistance programs are not wasted.

Competent Professional Authorities and other certifying staff should keep in mind that every nutrition risk condition does not necessarily lead itself to the possibility of regression. For example, gestational diabetes or gingivitis of pregnancy are not conditions to which a new mother could regress, since they are directly associated with pregnancy, and the breastfeeding or non-breastfeeding women cannot regress to being pregnant if she is no longer receiving WIC benefits.

501 - Possibility of Regression

Allowable Risk Conditions

Breastfeeding and Postpartum	Children
101 - Pregnant Underweight	103 - Underweight
102 - Postpartum Underweight *	113 - Overweight
111 - Pregnant Overweight	114 - At Risk of Becoming Overweight
112 - Postpartum Overweight *	121 - Short Stature
201 - Anemia	134 - Failure to Thrive
211 - Lead Poisoning	135 - Inadequate Growth
341 - Nutrient Deficiency Diseases	201 - Anemia
342 - Gastrointestinal Disorders	211 - Lead Poisoning
347 - Cancer	341 - Nutrient Deficiency Diseases
352 - Infectious Diseases	342 - Gastrointestinal Disorders
358 - Eating Disorders	347 - Cancer
360 - Other Medical Conditions	352 - Infectious Diseases
361 - Clinical Depression	360 - Other Medical Conditions
371 - Maternal Smoking *	361 - Clinical Depression
372 - Alcohol	381 - Dental Problems
373 - Illegal Drug Use	901 - Recipient of Abuse
381 - Dental Problems Excluding Gingivitis of Pregnancy	
602 - Breastfeeding Complications *	
901 - Recipient of Abuse	

* Breastfeeding Only

501 (continued)

Clarifications/ Guidelines

Regression cannot be used if any other risk condition exists and may not be used for two consecutive sub-certifications. This risk condition may only be used to sub-certify a breastfeeding, postpartum or child participant up to 60 days after the previous certification expiration date. Since initial certifications, not sub-certifications, are applicable to pregnant women and infants, they cannot qualify for regression.

Further, regression may only be used as a certifying nutrition risk when it complies with the policies established by the State agency for its use, as set forth in the WIC Nutrition Services Standards issued by FNS in 1988. Such policies must include:

1. A requirement for a nutritional assessment to rule out the existence of another current risk factor before using eligibility on regression.
2. A requirement for written identification of the risk factor to which the participant may regress.
3. A list of risk factors and priority levels for which eligibility based regression may be applied; and
4. A limit on the number of times regression for a given risk factor may be consecutively applied.

References

WIC Program Regulations: Section 246.7(e)(1)(iii)

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